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Fall 2014

## **African & African American Studies, Fall 2014**

University of Arkansas, Fayetteville. J. William Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences

University of Arkansas, Fayetteville. African and African American Studies Program

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Issue No. 02

# AFRICAN & AFRICAN AMERICAN *studies*



## *Growing and Expanding*

*New offices and courses, and a new faculty member, Scotty Thurman.*





UNIVERSITY OF  
ARKANSAS  
J. WILLIAM FULBRIGHT  
COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES

# AFRICAN & AFRICAN AMERICAN *studies*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

FALL 2014

### 4 | COVER STORY

The African and African American Studies Program in the J. William Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences in conjunction with the University Global Campus, created an online minor in addition to its established course of study. The program also has a new home in Memorial Hall and announced the addition of Scotty Thurman to the adjunct faculty.

- 3 | Letter from the Director
- 4 | Growing and Expanding
- 6 | Scotty Thurman
- 8 | The Bluest Eye

- 10 | Dr. Margaret Clark
- 11 | Six Pioneers
- 14 | Alumni Spotlight
- 15 | Student Spotlight
- 17 | Study Abroad
- 18 | Graduate Students

- 19 | Scholarships
- 20 | Graduate Assistants
- 22 | Staff News
- 22 | Faculty News
- 31 | Conference Presentations

- 32 | Brown Bag Series
- 33 | Advising Info
- 33 | Summer Reading
- 34 | Ghana Info
- 35 | Coffee with Professors
- 35 | Thank You

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## LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

The African and African American Studies Program celebrated another banner year as students and faculty witnessed the unveiling of the program's new home at Memorial Hall, a record number of students are matriculating into graduate programs, the introduction of an online minor and an impressive array of online class offerings, and the addition of an African and African American studies course to the University Core (awaiting final approval from ADHE). 2013-2014 represented unparalleled achievement for a program that has been a part of the University of Arkansas since the 1960s.

Faculty, graduate students, and staff relocated from the Stonehenge offices on Duncan Avenue to Memorial Hall, Suite 230 in October 2013. One of the University's most storied buildings, Memorial Hall was completed in 1940 and is recognized on the National Register of Historic Places. The space that once served campus as a segregated Student Union and ballroom now affords African and African American studies faculty and students accessible offices, conference space, and a student study lounge. We are able to use the space for classes, discussions, and events, such as our popular brown bag series. Renovations and reinforcements made to the suite in summer 2014 will improve this space for our expanding program.

In spring 2014, African and African American studies became the second Fulbright Program to offer a University Core course. The African American Experience (AAST 2023) was approved for a general education credit by the Fulbright College Academic Programs Committee, Fulbright College Faculty, University Course and Programs Committee, and University General Education Core Committee. Beginning in fall 2015, students at the University of Arkansas will be able to select this class as an integral facet of their education. The addition of the African American Experience to the University Core is a remarkable accomplishment for our program that we will continue to build upon.

Further, the addition of an online minor in African and African American studies will offer greater access for diverse educational opportunities to students beyond the University of Arkansas' borders. In partnership with the University of Arkansas Global Campus, the African and African American Studies Program now provides a fifteen-hour, interdisciplinary minor that may be completed entirely in the virtual classroom. This academic opportunity arrives as our program vastly expands its traditional and online courses for 2014-2015. African and African American studies will offer an unprecedented twenty courses that



*Calvin White, Jr., Director of African and African American Studies*

includes topics ranging from history and politics, to sociology, theatre, and language. We are proud to offer an ever-growing array of educational opportunities and experiences to students across our campus.

During the 2013-214 school year, the African and African American Studies Program's value has been emphasized as an asset to the University of Arkansas. Housed in a beautiful new space in the heart of campus, we look forward to continuing our mission to advance social consciousness through diverse educational opportunities that yield the highest levels of academic excellence in a variety of classic and innovative formats. The best is yet to come!

Sincerely,

*Calvin White, Jr.*

Calvin White, Jr.  
Associate Professor of History  
Director, African and African American Studies





New offices located in Memorial Hall 230 on the University of Arkansas campus.

## **GROWING AND EXPANDING:** NEW COURSE OPTIONS EXPAND INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES TO VIRTUAL EDUCATION

In 2014, the African and African American Studies Program at the University of Arkansas, in conjunction with the University Global Campus, created an online minor in addition to its established course of study. As the first African and African American studies program in the state to offer an online minor, we are proud to expand our interdisciplinary studies to virtual education. This accomplishment reflects the program's mission to

provide a multifaceted approach to explore the legacy of the African diaspora and African-descended people's experiences within Africa and the Americas.

"We are, first and foremost, an academic program dedicated to scholastic excellence," said Dr. Calvin White, Jr., associate professor of history and director of African and African American studies. "Our success in the traditional classroom is evident by the volume of students we

send to graduate and professional programs across the nation. The ability to offer those same opportunities to a broader student population in a non-traditional setting reflects our primary mission to make education accessible and equitable to those outside of the University of Arkansas campus. An online minor not only serves as a supplement for major programs of study at the University, but will also provide a strong basis for



pursuing and attaining graduate and professional opportunities, as well as employment.”

Goals and objectives for students pursuing the AAST online minor are the same as those pursued by students in traditional classrooms. Students will learn to critically engage and effectively communicate the themes of African and African American studies. Further, their scholarship will enable them to understand and analyze the impact of Africans and African Americans in a global perspective.

Online courses that are already available to students include the African American Experience (AAST 2023), a cultural studies survey that examines all facets of African

American life, African Americans in Sport (AAST 3023) addresses historical, sociological, and political issues of African American athletes, African American History to 1877 (AAST 3233) and African American History since 1877 (3243) provide assessments of the black experience from Africa to the present day. African Americans in Film (AAST 3263) explores the legacy of images of African Americans in the context of stereotyping and/or realistic representations used in cinema. The Old South (AAST 4563) analyzes the history of antebellum life and African Americans’ position within society. Courses currently in development include African Americans in Higher

Education and Social Work with African American Families and Communities.

“We are ecstatic to be the pioneer program for online education in African and African American studies in the state of Arkansas,” stated White. “Academics root our organization, but we are also committed to advancing social consciousness. One way we can achieve that is to make high quality education accessible to those who may not have the ability, resources, or time to engage in a mainstream classroom setting. I believe education is the great equalizer and that by offering online courses, we are fulfilling our mission.”



Memorial Hall was added to the National Register of Historic Places on September 4, 1992.

“

*We are ecstatic to be the pioneer program for online education in African and African American studies in the state of Arkansas.*

”

*Calvin White, Jr.*



# FROM PRO-BASKETBALL PLAYER TO PROFESSOR: NEWEST FACULTY MEMBER SCOTTY THURMAN



The African and African American Studies Program is excited to announce the addition of Scotty Thurman to our adjunct faculty. Thurman, a former Razorback, has recently joined the Razorback Sports Network as a color analyst for the men's basketball games while also working full-time as Director of the Student-Athlete Development Program. Beginning this fall he will be teaching African Americans in Sport (AAST 3023). Well known for his winning three-point basket in the 1994 NCAA finals against Duke University, his stellar reputation now includes "educator" as well as "athlete."

Thurman's dedication to education earned him the attention of Dr. Calvin White, Jr., director of the African and African American Studies Program and associate professor in the Department of History. Dr. White approached him about teaching classes in African and African American studies, and persuaded him of the impact he could make across the campus community. "I already spend lots of time on campus anyway," smiles Thurman, "so why not do this?" Dr. White believes that Professor Thurman is "a great example of how education and athletics can work together. Not only do students have an excellent mentor in Thurman, but they also have someone who is passionate about education and learning and truly values both aspects of his own student-athlete experience."

A Louisiana native, Thurman grew up in Ruston, near Louisiana Tech University. The youngest of four

children, he states that going to college was never a question. "My parents both went to college, but due to life's circumstances, neither were able to receive a degree. My mother was a social worker and my father worked a seven-day on/seven-day off schedule in the Gulf of Mexico. They wanted me to be able to excel in life and made education a focal point, beginning in kindergarten. I came from a culture of education," notes Thurman. When asked why he chose not to attend college near home, he candidly remarked that he never wanted to pursue his education at Louisiana Tech. "My mother always said 'that sometimes you have to go, to grow,'" Thurman remembers. That instruction led him to the University of Arkansas in 1992, a school roughly six hours from his hometown, where he could obtain a college education as a student-athlete. Thurman was a fixture of the University of Arkansas Razorbacks Men's basketball team until 1995. Following three celebrated years, he embarked on a professional basketball career in Europe and the Middle East for eleven seasons – an experience he values as a unique kind of education that recalls his mother's advice. After playing abroad in countries such as Lebanon, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, and Yugoslavia, he returned to Arkansas, in part to spend more time with his son. In 2001, Thurman enrolled at Philander Smith College, one of Arkansas' most esteemed historically black colleges, where he completed his Bachelor of Arts degree in English. In 2012, while simultaneously working as the Director of Student-Athlete

Development at the University of Arkansas, Thurman completed his Master of Arts degree in Secondary Education at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, a program where emphasis on classroom experience enabled him to teach at Little Rock's Episcopal Collegiate School. That opportunity helped prepare him as he began the challenge of assisting with the overall enhancement of the academic culture with the student-athletes of his first alma mater in Fayetteville.

His values of enhancing athletes' educational experience extend to his family. Both Thurman and his wife, Regina, participated in athletics during their time at the University of Arkansas. Regina was a cheerleader during the 1989-1990 season and a member of the Pom Squad from 1990-1994 while simultaneously studying for her kinesiology degree. Like her husband, Regina ensured her priorities were set straight, "getting school work done prior to practice, making a schedule, and organizing daily activities were crucial." In 2006, she received her medical degree from the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences. In the midst of raising their two children, the Thurmans are determined to ensure they know that "academics are the key for long term success. We encourage both of our children to be active in athletics, but we emphasize grades, integrity, and accountability, as pillars for growth and overall enhancement," notes Thurman.

As the Director of Student-Athlete Development, Thurman oversaw life skills, community service, career and personal development for members of the men's basketball team. Devotion to learning, instilled in him by his parents and his own career as a student-athlete, grounds Thurman's efforts. A college education makes "such an impact on young people," he states. As a former Razorback himself, Thurman affirms that he is "obligated to help these young men." As a liaison between the student-athletes and the central academic office, part of his duties are ensuring that the players not only attend and participate in their courses, but also that they focus on building relationships with faculty members to ensure a quality learning experience. "Sometimes, I'll sneak around and peek into classrooms to make sure our guys are active in class," he laughs. That reverberates through Thurman's behavior toward current Razorbacks. "It is important that the student-athletes value their education, as well as the game of basketball," he says. "In 2014, we graduated six basketball players. During my four years, we've graduated eleven players and four former players."

"We are excited to have Scotty Thurman teaching for us," says Dr. White. "He will be an invaluable member of the faculty who has first hand experience of professional sports and the classroom." Thurman has already integrated himself into the program, attending events such as Coffee with the Professors and spending time getting to know the faculty, staff, and students of the African and African



American Studies Program. "I feel extremely comfortable here," says Thurman of the program. "It is a welcoming environment where students and faculty are supported and encouraged to do their best."

Professor Thurman will begin teaching for the African and African American Studies Program in fall 2014 with African Americans in Sport, in addition to Professor Carl Riley who also teaches the course. In the near future Thurman will also teach our Introduction to African and African American Studies class (AAST 1003) and the African American Experience (AAST 2023). We look forward to his impact in the classroom and welcome him aboard!





# AFRICAN AND AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES AND THE UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE PRESENT **THE BLUEST EYE**



Krys Garret and Julia Holliday (foreground), Britney Walker-Merritte (background)

The African and African American Studies Program, co-sponsored by the Department of Theatre, presented its seventh annual spring play, *The Bluest Eye*, in April 2014. Nobel Prize-winning author Toni Morrison's work recounts the tragic life of eleven-year-old Pecola Breedlove, a young black girl living in Ohio in the 1940s, who wants nothing more than to be loved by her family and schoolmates. Instead, she faces constant ridicule and abuse for which she blames her dark skin. Pecola prays for blue eyes, sure that love will follow. Through rich language and bold vision, this powerful stage adaptation of Morrison's American classic explores the crippling toll that a legacy of racism has on a community, a family, and an innocent girl.

"I've always wanted to play a role like this,"

said Britney Walker-Merritte, a first-year graduate student actor in the Department of Theatre who plays Pecola. "It is a real story to me; I refuse to do anything fake on stage, especially a role like this."

Brandon Sims and Kimberly Janssen, also graduate students, are two of the many students who have found that involvement in the annual play encourages them to embrace academic and artistic challenges. "Participating in this play is revelatory and presents me with the opportunity for my own case study," Sims said. "I have a class, in which we explore adaptations of novels. So, in a sense, this is the extracurricular to my curricular activities." Janssen acknowledged that the play "definitely [took] me out of my comfort zone. When I signed up for it, I looked for a challenge so this definitely fulfilled that."

“My good friend was in last year’s production, *Waiting to Be Invited*, and she was the one that really motivated me to audition for this one,” said Julia Holiday, a senior biology and philosophy major who plays Pecola’s mother, Pauline Breedlove.

In addition to *Waiting to Be Invited*, past productions include *The Colored Museum*, *Twilight: Los Angeles 1992*, *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Enuf*, and *College Life: The Deciding Factor*, an original play written by African and African American studies student, DaLaura Patton.

Dr. Pearl Ford Dowe, associate professor of political science, applauds the efforts of the African and African American Studies Program and the Department of Theatre’s partnership. “Theatre is a medium that entertains even as we address the complicated issues of race relations and how African Americans have navigated their roles as citizens of this country. We continue to collaborate with the Department of Theatre to produce plays that engage and educate our audiences on the importance of African American history and culture.”

Due to the success of these plays, the Department of Theatre has added this production to the yearly program. Chandler Birmingham, a sophomore who recently declared a major in theatre, served as the stage manager for *The Bluest Eye*. The 2013-2014 academic year was her first year in the Department of Theatre, and she is happy with her decision to switch majors and pursue her passion. When asked to describe what she felt when she first joined the production team for the show, she said, “At first I was scared and now I am proud.”

Professor Clinnesha D. Sibley directed this spring’s production. An assistant professor of theatre, head of playwriting and affiliated member of the African and African American Studies Program and proud alumna of the George Washington Carver Research Program, Sibley holds a Master of Fine Arts in playwriting from the University of Arkansas and a Bachelor of Arts from Tougaloo College in Jackson, Mississippi. She recently received an Arkansas Individual Artist Fellowship through the Arkansas Arts Council. In 2013, her play, *Tell Martha Not to Moan*, received its world premiere in Denver, Colorado, and her anthology, *King Me: Three*

*One-Act Plays Inspired by the Life and Legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*, was released by University of Arkansas Press. In spring 2014, Sibley traveled to Kansas City, Missouri for a staged reading of her newest play *The Experiment: A Tribute to Kenneth and Mamie Clark*, at the American Jazz Museum’s Gem Theatre.

The annual spring play is a highlight for the African and African American Studies Program. Past performances were delivered to packed houses consisting of both on-campus and off-campus patrons. Each play is carefully selected to compliment the program’s mission and the excitement and quality grow each year. These plays have been so well received on campus and beyond that the Department of Theatre is adding it to their annual series!







## RECOGNIZING THE LEGACY OF DR. MARGARET CLARK

In 1969, Dr. Margaret Clark began working at the University of Arkansas on a part-time instructorship while also obtaining her doctoral degree in foreign language education. She was the first African American to teach in the Department of Foreign Languages (currently the Department of World Languages, Literatures, and Cultures) and the College of Education and Health Professions. Clark taught at the University for twenty-nine years before retiring as an associate professor emerita in 1998.

Clark, a native of Dixie, Georgia, earned her undergraduate degree in foreign languages from Arkansas Agricultural, Mechanical, and Normal (AM&N, now the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff) before heading to Fayetteville for her Master of Arts in French in 1968. As one of the earliest African American professors to teach at the University of

Arkansas, Clark helped African American students charter the campus chapter, Kappa Iota, of Alpha Kappa Alpha, Inc. sorority. Not only was Clark important in creating the sorority's chapter on campus, but she also served as its graduate advisor for twenty-two years as well as its faculty advisor.

Clark was very much a pioneer of firsts for African American women in Northwest Arkansas. She was the first African American president of the Fayetteville Business of Professional Women's Club, the Fayetteville Branch of the American Association of University Women, the Arkansas Division of the American Association of University Women, and the Arkansas Chapter of the Arkansas-East Bolivia Partners of the Americas.

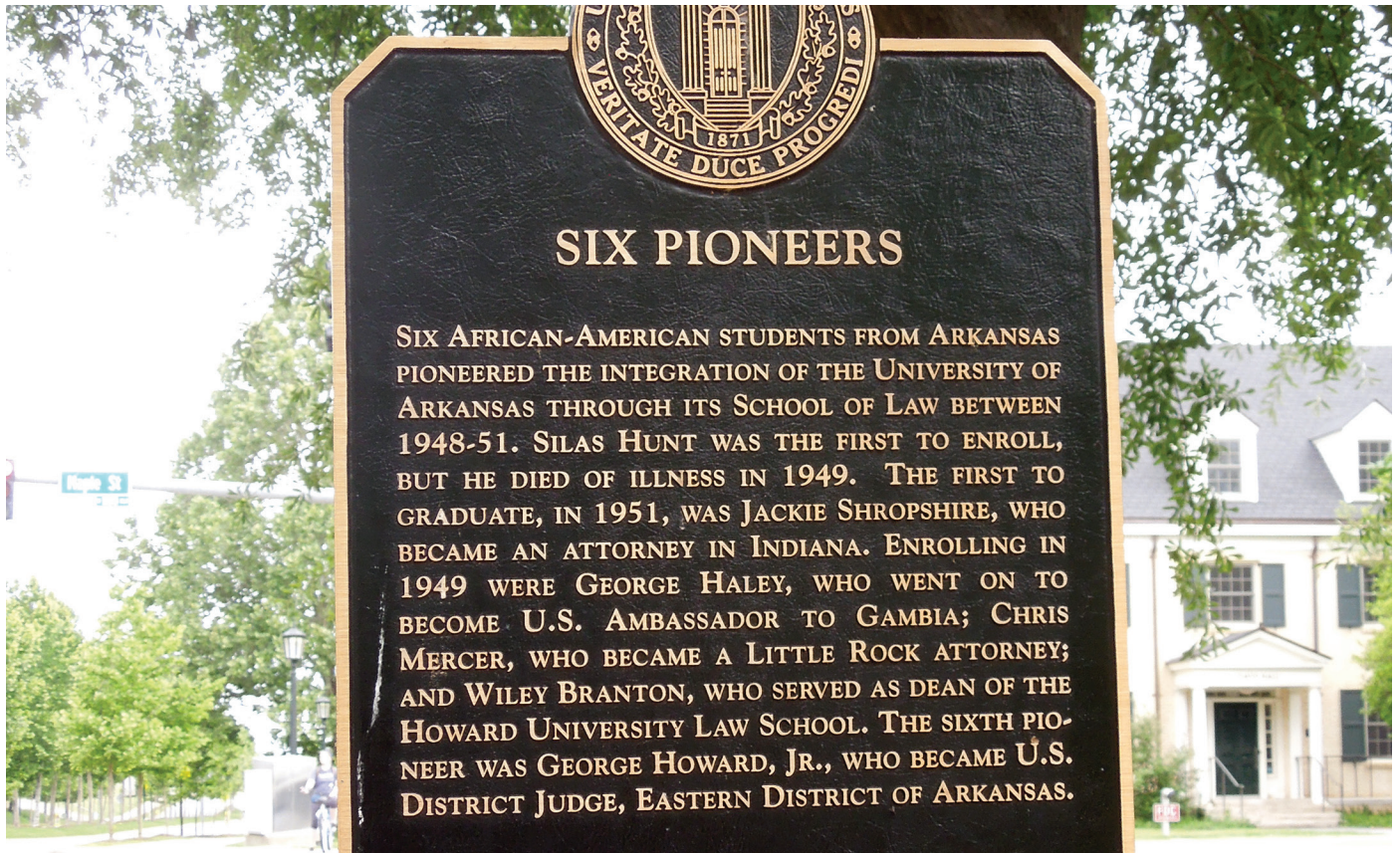
A dedicated professor who was committed to community service, in 1989, Clark was named Outstanding Faculty Member for the National PanHellenic Council, and was also the recipient of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Lifetime Achievement Award. Alongside this, Clark was also recognized that same year by the Phi Alpha Omega graduate chapter of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., where she received its first "Hats Off" Award. In 2004, the graduate chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha, Inc. fraternity honored Clark with the Torchbearer Award for her community service. Dr. Clark was named one of the first ten Silas Hunt Legacy awardees in 2006, which was established to honor African Americans who have made a lasting contribution to the University of Arkansas, the state of Arkansas, and the United States. Additionally, a scholarship in Clark's name was presented to an incoming freshman. We continue to remember and celebrate the efforts of Dr. Clark as one of the first African Americans to become a faculty member at the University of Arkansas.



Still frame from Pryor Center interview. © Pryor Center for Arkansas Oral and Visual History.



# SIX PIONEERS



Silas Hunt was the first African American to attend the University of Arkansas in 1948. Although tuberculosis prevented Hunt from attaining his degree, five other African American men followed in Hunt's footsteps and together became known as the "Six Pioneers." Jackie Shropshire, George Haley, C. C. Mercer, Wiley Branton, and George Howard, Jr. all entered the University of Arkansas' School of Law between 1948 and 1950 and went on to do great things in Arkansas and the nation.

Jackie Shropshire entered the law program at the University of Arkansas in fall 1948, shortly following Hunt's departure. A Little Rock native, Shropshire received his B.S. degree from the Wilberforce College of Education and Industrial Arts in Ohio, in 1948. Like most the pioneers, Shropshire was a World War II veteran, and was able to attend the University thanks to the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944—commonly known as the G.I. Bill. Shropshire attended the School of Law under the same segregated conditions as Hunt. He was completely separated from his fellow classmates until their classes became so crowded that it was no longer feasible to retain this policy. Dean Robert Leflar subsequently

allowed Shropshire to attend a limited number of classes (based on which professors were willing to integrate their classes) with his fellow cohort, but again, remained segregated within the classroom, with a railing surrounding his seat.

The following year, in fall 1949, Christopher Columbus "C.C." Mercer and George Haley joined Shropshire at the University's Law School. Mercer, a native of Pine Bluff, Arkansas, received his undergraduate degree in social services from the Arkansas Agricultural, Mechanical & Normal College (AM&N, now the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff) in 1946. Illness prevented him from serving in the military during World War II and thus, and so Mercer had to fund his education at the University of Arkansas. Haley was born in Tennessee but raised in Pine Bluff. He attended Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia and served in the Air Force during World War II.

With the admittance of Haley and Mercer, the three African American students had all of their classes with the white students, and, while the railing disappeared, they were still assigned to specific seats. They were, however, beginning to remove some



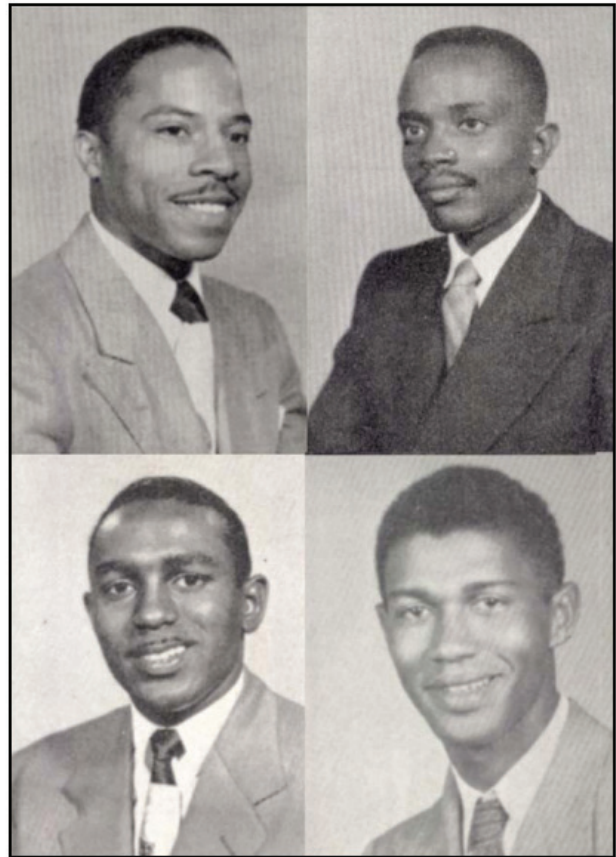
of these internal segregation barriers. One such achievement was their full membership into the Student Bar Association, which was a victory after their original membership cards were deemed merely “honorary.”

Haley recalled that due to segregation, they were not allowed to study in the law library. Therefore, the students had to check out any necessary materials from the library and use them outside of the facilities. Additionally, they were not allowed to use the student restrooms. Initially the students used Dean Leflar’s private restroom, which required obtaining the key from his secretary. As this was complicated and the white female secretary complained about constantly negotiating with the students for use of the restroom, it was then decided that the African American law students should use the faculty restrooms, which could only be accessed by walking through the student restrooms. Haley recalls that this system was “utterly ridiculous,” and an obvious pressure in addition to the academic stress of their professional degree. However, the students recalled that there was strength in numbers. With each African American student enrolled in the School of Law came new opportunities for companionship.

Wiley Branton began at the University in the spring of 1950. Having attempted to register as an undergraduate student in the University’s business program two years earlier, Branton now entered the School of Law, having completed his undergraduate degree at the Arkansas AM&N. Internal segregation was easing with each passing semester. By the end of spring 1950, all students could sit where they liked, and Shropshire even played on the law school’s softball team.

George Howard, Jr. was the final member of the Six Pioneers to begin at the University of Arkansas. Another Pine Bluff native, he served in the Navy before attending Lincoln University in Missouri for his undergraduate degree. Howard was the first African American to live in campus housing, with Haley and Mercer shortly following him.

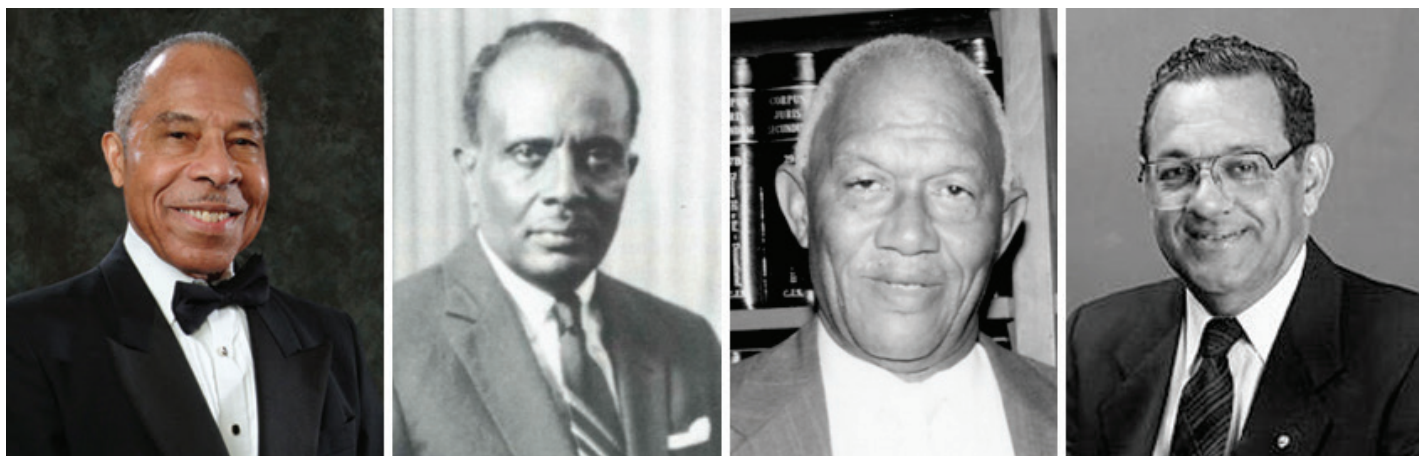
Shropshire was the first to graduate from the University in 1951. Haley graduated in June 1952, with Branton and Howard following in 1953. Due to financial reasons, Mercer had to take time out of his degree but graduated in 1955. Sadly, despite the trailblazing efforts of the Six Pioneers, only one African American student attended, but did not graduate, the University of Arkansas’ School of Law between 1955 and 1968.



*Razorback yearbook portraits of George Haley (top left), George Howard (top right), Jackie Shropshire (bottom left), Christopher Mercer (bottom right). Courtesy Special Collections, University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville.*

Shropshire, following graduation, worked with a Little Rock law firm for five years before moving to Gary, Indiana and setting up his own practice. Haley moved to Kansas City, Kansas, and went on to become a deputy city attorney, and one of Kansas’ first African American state senators. Haley’s political involvement led him to Washington, D.C., where he served seven United States Presidents in various federal roles, including a position as the U.S. Ambassador to Gambia. Branton went back to Pine Bluff to set up his own practice and became involved in the historic *Cooper v. Aaron* case, which was related to the Little Rock Central High School crisis of 1957. Branton was a life long crusader for civil rights; he headed the Voter Education Project, worked for President Lyndon B. Johnson on the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and eventually became dean of Howard University’s Law School. Mercer, following his delayed graduation, went to work for Branton in Pine Bluff before moving to Little Rock and becoming a field secretary for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People





From left to right: George Haley, George Howard, C.C. Mercer and Wiley Branton

(NAACP) and the co-director of the Arkansas Council on Human Relations, a civil rights organization. He was invaluable as an aide to Daisy Bates during the Central High School crisis, transporting the “Little Rock Nine” to the school and back to ensure their safety. In 1967, Mercer became the first African American deputy prosecuting attorney in Arkansas’ Sixth Judicial District. Howard also returned to Pine Bluff once he had passed the bar exam. He was heavily involved with the NAACP, and served as the president of the NAACP State Conference of Branches. He was involved in many desegregation lawsuits in the state. In 1969, Howard was appointed to the State Claims Commission and later served as the first African American on the Arkansas Supreme Court and the Arkansas Court of Appeals. In 1980, he was appointed to the U.S. District Court in Little Rock as the first African American federal judge in Arkansas.

The Six Pioneers made monumental gains for the right of African Americans to receive an equal education in the state of Arkansas. Their gains are particularly meaningful to our program as we understand that our office, now housed in Memorial Hall, served as the Student Union during their time on campus. However, the Six Pioneers were not allowed to enter the Student Union due to segregation. Therefore, we remember their legacy to the University and our state as we encourage equal opportunities for education with our program.

## Desegregating the University of Arkansas School of Law: L. Clifford Davis and the Six Pioneers

JUDITH KILPATRICK

THE FIRST AFRICAN-AMERICAN STUDENT ADMITTED to the University of Arkansas after Reconstruction was Silas H. Hunt, who enrolled at the School of Law in January 1948. That simple fact, and the university’s story of how this early instance of desegregation was achieved, have been related in prior articles and books.<sup>1</sup> Less well-known to students of civil rights or Arkansas history are the stories of some other African-American pioneers—one who preceded Silas Hunt in challenging segregation at the law school and the five who quickly followed in Hunt’s footsteps. By admitting Silas Hunt, the University of Arkansas intended to forestall a suit. Robert A. Leflar, the dean who admitted Hunt, was concerned that the university’s reputation and relations between African-American and white Arkansans would be harmed by such a suit.<sup>2</sup> The United States Supreme Court had decided in 1938 that, in the absence of a state-supported black law school, the University of Missouri must admit an African American, Lloyd Gaines, to its School of Law.<sup>3</sup> Two other suits, against the University of Oklahoma School of Law and the University of Texas School of Law, were in progress. Leflar’s concerns were valid, then, since Arkan-

<sup>1</sup>See, for example, Robert A. Leflar, *The First 100 Years: Centennial History of the University of Arkansas* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Foundation, 1972); Guerdon D. Nichols, “Breaking the Color Barrier at the University of Arkansas,” *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 27 (Spring 1968): 3-21.

<sup>2</sup>Leflar, *First 100 Years*, 279.

<sup>3</sup>*State of Missouri v. Gaines*, 305 U.S. 337 (1938).

Judith Kilpatrick, professor and associate dean at the University of Arkansas School of Law, is the author of *There When We Needed Him: Wiley Austin Branton, Civil Rights Warrior* (2007). Portions of this article are based on that work, which is used with the permission of the University of Arkansas Press.

Judith Kilpatrick, “Desegregating the University of Arkansas School of Law: L. Clifford Davis and the Six Pioneers,” *Arkansas Historical Quarterly*, 68 (Summer 2009): 123-156



## SETH JEWELL

Seth R. Jewell graduated from the University of Arkansas with a Bachelors of Arts in political science, and a minor in African and African American studies. In 2010, he earned his Juris Doctorate from the University of Arkansas School of Law and has served as an associate attorney for the Little Rock law firm Wright, Lindsey & Jennings LLP since 2011. His practice centers on commercial litigation, including banking and commercial lending, creditors' rights and collections and contract disputes. Over the course of his career, Jewell has interned for Senator Mark Pryor in Washington, D.C., and worked as a legal extern for Walmart Stores, Inc., assisting the Walmart legal department with tort litigation matters.

Jewell credits his participation in the African and African American Studies Program at the University of Arkansas with affording him an education that extended beyond the classroom. "I have always been fascinated by other cultures and I developed a passion for the study and understanding of African American history. My experiences in the classroom and participation in AAST extracurricular activities, such as a theatrical production about the 1992 Los Angeles race riots, opened my eyes to the reality of racial tension that still permeates our society today. It is not an exaggeration for me to say that I am the person I am today because of my participation in the African and African American Studies Program at the University of Arkansas," he stated.

Engagement with and investment from professors within the African and African American Studies Program profoundly affected Jewell, who particularly counts Drs. Calvin White, Jr. and Charles Robinson as instrumental to his development as a student and a member of the greater community. He notes that he came to the program from a disadvantaged background, and that his mentors provided the inspiration and support he needed to succeed at the University of Arkansas and beyond. Jewell affirmed, "Now that I look back on my time studying under them, I realize how grateful I am for the influence they have had on me. Because of these relationships, I was able to gain the skillset necessary to pursue a law degree after graduation and ultimately secure employment at the third largest law firm in the state of Arkansas, a firm I chose because of the value they place on diversity and equality both in the practice of law and the community



Seth Jewell, B.A. political science, minor African and African American Studies. Additional degrees earned: J.D. (University of Arkansas)

as a whole. In the years following the Central High Crisis, the firm established itself as a leader in the cause of diversity in the legal profession. Wright, Lindsey & Jennings LLP was the first large law firm in Arkansas to elect an African American partner, a woman partner, and a woman chair of its management committee. WLJ prides itself in employing men and women of a variety of races, ethnicities, religions, and political views and is committed to fostering a diverse and inclusive work environment.

"Regardless of your race or desired career path, choosing to participate in the African and African American Studies Program will be one of the best decisions you make while at the University of Arkansas. I say that not only as a proud alumnus, but also as a former student who was forever changed by the curriculum and faculty of this program."



## AYANA GRAY

Ayana Gray is a junior pursuing a Bachelor of Arts with a combined major in African and African American studies and political science. As an Honors College student, she still finds time to gain professional experience through her internship for the Outreach & Engagement Division of the Arkansas Alumni Association while maintaining academic success. Gray is the recipient of the Bayard Rustin Endowed Scholarship, the Razorback Bridge Scholarship and the Black Alumni Society Scholarship and currently mentors lowerclassmen in these programs.

Additionally, she serves as a student leader on campus. Gray states, “I really wanted to check out everything the University had to offer and I found some great organizations and opportunities to really delve into and commit myself.” She is currently a representative for the Center of Multicultural and Diversity Education and the Office of Diversity Affairs, and the Vice President of the Kappa Iota Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.

Originally from Atlanta, Georgia and Little Rock, Arkansas, Gray has taken an avid interest in the African and African American studies curriculum and become involved with the program. She says, “The African and African American Studies Program at the University of Arkansas’ effect on me is multifaceted. Academically, it’s been nothing short of refreshing to study in depth the continent of Africa as well as the integral role African Americans have played in America’s history and contemporary—both of which are often grossly marginalized. More personally, the dialogue and discoveries I have made both in class and meeting with the program’s professors has meant more to me than I can explain. As I consider a future career in law, I know that my aspiration to someday become a civil rights or immigration attorney has indubitably been affirmed by the plethora of experiences I’ve had thanks to the program.”

Gray was a participant in this year’s study abroad trip to Ghana, where she felt a “sincere feeling of welcome from the Ghanaian people.” She states that her “three weeks in the country challenged me to expand even more broadly, to think about things I never expected to, like what really defines ‘wealth,’ ‘happiness,’ and the idea of ‘home.’”



Ayana Gray, pursuing a B.A. combined major in African and African American studies and political science.

“

*Three weeks in the country challenged me to expand even more broadly, to think about things I never expected to, like what really defines ‘wealth,’ ‘happiness,’ and the idea of ‘home.’*

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## MIKAYLA WOOD

Mikayla Wood is a senior communication disorders major, minoring in African and African American studies. Following a year of Swahili classes with Dr. Sabrina Billings, which she credits as one of her favorite classes of her academic career thus far, Wood decided to join the African and African American Studies Program.

Wood attributes the African and African American Studies Program with making her a more well rounded student, given her a valuable education in African American history and race relations. Her Swahili classes made her realize a passion for Africa and even motivated her to visit the continent. With this education, Wood has traveled to Ethiopia and Ghana with Campus Crusade for Christ (CRU), a Registered Student Organization.

After graduating from the University of Arkansas, Wood hopes to return to Africa and spend more time integrating into life there and getting to understand more fully the things she has learned in the classroom. She believes that she has learned much from becoming a part of the program that will help her in her future career in health.



Mikayla Wood, senior communication disorders major, minoring in African and African American studies

“

*No matter your life goals, I encourage everyone to take an African and African American studies course or join the program. The curriculum and faculty encourage all to grow. This ultimately enhanced my ability to make positive decisions after college. I am who I am today because of this program.*

”





## HANNAH MCGHEE

Hannah McGhee, a senior journalism major, and African and African American studies minor, studied the Italian language and race relations in Italy during the spring of 2014. She chronicled her experience through a blog that helped her to stay connected with her peers in Arkansas and engage students across campus.

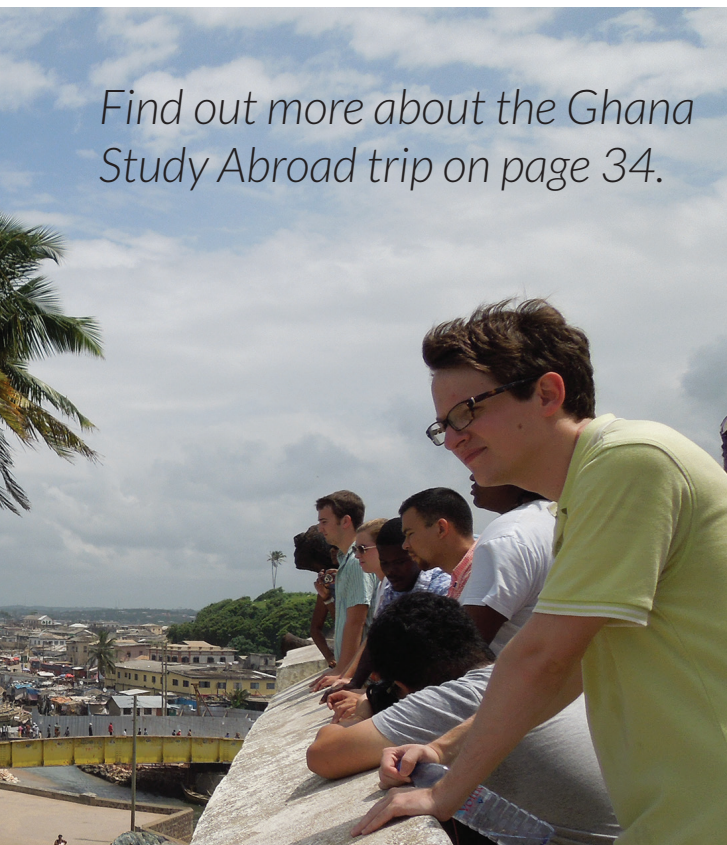
McGhee studied at the Università degli Studi della Tuscia in Viterbo, a twelfth century town approximately sixty miles north of Rome. Her coursework not only helped improve her Italian language skills, but also intersected with her interest in race relations. The African and African American Studies Program awarded her a study abroad scholarship to support her academic experience.

"We were extremely pleased to be able to support Ms. McGhee in her dream to study abroad in Italy," said Calvin White, Jr, program director and associate professor of history. "She is one of the program's many students who have made a commitment to study the importance of race in our global community. We are proud to see students like Hannah excel in the classroom and make African and African American studies one of Fulbright College's fastest growing programs."



Hannah McGhee, Journalism major with a minor in African and African American studies

*Find out more about the Ghana Study Abroad trip on page 34.*



"The African and African American Studies Program is especially interested in ensuring that our students receive a truly global education," said White. "Following the model of Senator J. William Fulbright, African and African American studies has financially supported its students through study abroad scholarships for the last five years. Students like Hannah have studied in the United Kingdom, Turkey, Cameroon and Tanzania, as well as participated in the program's own faculty-taught study abroad in Ghana, held every other summer since 2010."

A Memphis native, McGhee came to the University of Arkansas in 2011. She has been named to the Dean's and Chancellor's List, and maintains a strong record of extra-curricular engagement as the Pi Beta Phi sorority's new member coordinator. In 2012, she benefited the University of Arkansas as a student ambassador, as well as an ambassador to the 2013 Razorback football team. McGhee is a stellar representation of the commitment to academic excellence and interdisciplinary experiences of the African and African American Studies Program.



# GRADUATE/PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL BOUND

This year, the African and African American Studies Program is thrilled to say that we graduated 25 AAST majors and minors in 2013-2014! Our students are continuing to contribute to the University's goal of increasing graduation rates, and we are also excited to see a number of our students continue their education in graduate and professional programs.



**Kendall Mair** will attend South Texas College of Law in Houston, TX, having completed her undergraduate degree in African and African American studies and history in spring 2013.



**Janet Shields** received her undergraduate degree in African and African American studies and history in Spring 2014 and was named the runner up for the James Madison Fellowship. A prestigious award, it offers \$24,000 to individuals desiring to become outstanding teachers

of the American Constitution at the secondary school level. Shields is currently a non-degree seeking graduate student, and hopes to attend graduate school in the fall of 2014.



**Kevin Morris** completed his B.A. degree in African and African American studies and philosophy and will begin his Master of Arts in Pan African Studies at Syracuse University this coming fall.



**Cameron Woods** completed his B.A. in political science and journalism with a minor in African and African American studies in spring 2014. He will attend Southern Illinois University to read for a joint Master of Science in Education and Juris Doctorate.



**Kevin McClenney** received his B.A. in African and African American studies and history in spring 2014. He is currently in the process of applying to M.F.A. programs where he hopes to launch a multimedia art project.



**Jasmine Spears** completed her B.A. in African and African American studies and sociology and criminal justice this year and is heading to Little Rock to pursue a Master of Arts in criminal justice at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock this fall.



**Brandon Dismute** began his Master in Urban Planning at the University of Buffalo, the State University of New York in Spring 2014. He received his undergraduate degree in African and African American studies and political science in 2013.



**Frankc Berlanga Medina** received his B.A in African and African American studies and history this spring and is staying at the University of Arkansas to read for his Master of Arts in history. His research focuses on race and gender.

*Congratulations to all our recent graduates and good luck on your future endeavors!*



# SCHOLARSHIPS

This spring, the African and African American Studies Program in the J. William Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences awarded more than \$50,000 to twenty scholarship recipients for the 2014-15 academic year, including nine summer 2014 scholarships to support students participating in the program's faculty-led study abroad to Ghana. Each awardee represents the African and African American Studies Program's commitment to outstanding academic performance, program involvement, and campus and community leadership.

"The excellence that our students have achieved over the last several years has been astounding," said Calvin White Jr., associate professor of history and program director of African and African American studies. "Our students have been admitted to top Ph.D. programs and law schools, completed nationally competitive internships and secured employment in the home offices of Fortune 500 companies, such as Walmart, Tyson Foods, and J.B. Hunt Trucking. Scholarship support from donors and the University of Arkansas make this possible."

James Gigantino, assistant professor of history and chair of the African and African American Studies Program's scholarship committee stated, "Our scholarships help our program achieve one of its core objectives, to ensure accessibility to higher education and to study abroad experiences to students. I am proud of all of our students for achieving so much during their time with us."

Among the scholarships awarded, senior Kevin McClenney earned the L.E. Gene and Jean Read Hudson Access Arkansas Scholarship. A native of Winston-Salem, North Carolina and a veteran of the United States Air Force, McClenney maintains a 4.0 grade point average while pursuing a combined major in African and African American studies and history. He is a dedicated member of the program.

"AAST has been an essential part of my great experience at the University of Arkansas," McClenney said. "The professors are personable and have gone out of their way to help me, and all the classes are all top-notch in terms of curriculum, teaching styles and subject matter."

McClenney was a part of the 2014 study

abroad program, "Ghana: From Kingdom, Slavery, Colonialism, Independence and Modern Development," which is held in the summer of even-numbered years. During their pre-departure studies and their three weeks in country, students discussed Ghana's involvement in the trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, colonialism, pan-Africanism and the modern world.

Ayana Gray, recipient of the Bayard Rustin Endowed Scholarship, also participated in the Ghana course. An Honors College junior pursuing a combined major in African and African American studies and political science, Gray has been an active member of the program since coming to the University. She credits the program's influence for her decision to pursue a career in civil rights and immigration law. As part of her scholarship, she will volunteer this year at the Omni Center for Peace, Justice and Ecology.

In addition to McClenney and Gray, this year's recipients for the program's endowed scholarships included Michael Day and LaChassity Phillips, who each earned the Ronnie Brewer Endowed Scholarship; and Tomario King and Kassidy Boyle, who each won the Dillard's and CDI Contractors, LLC Endowed Scholarship. The African and African American Studies Program also awarded academic scholarships to Tonisha Brown, Kadeesia Crutchfield, Rachel Dukes, Whitney Frierson, Dara Gaines, Antonio Igbokidi, Laylah Leon, Tabitha Orr, and Reginald Thurman, Jr.. Recipients of the 2014 Ghana Study Abroad Scholarship included Ayana Gray, Iesha Green, Kevin McClenney, Malachi Nichols, Shareika Pendleton, LaChassity Phillips, Janet Shields, Sarah Sloan, and Christopher Warren.

## MAKE A GIFT

If you would like to make a contribution to the African and African American Studies program, please contact Ashlie Hilbun in the office of development and external relations at 479-575-3712 or [Fulbright@uark.edu](mailto:Fulbright@uark.edu).







## SARAH RIVA

Sarah Riva received her undergraduate degree in history from Royal Holloway, University of London in 2010. In 2013, she earned her Master of Arts in public history from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. Sarah is currently a second-year Ph.D. student at the University of Arkansas and has recently transferred to a graduate assistantship for the African and African American Studies Program from the Department of History. Sarah is a U.S. historian, with a focus on twentieth century African American history. Her dissertation project will address the role played by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in Arkansas and how this compares with their activities in other Southern states.

“Ever since I took a class on the origins of the civil rights movement in my undergrad I have been fascinated with the history of race relations in America. When the opportunity to move to Arkansas came about, I jumped at the chance to come and study in the region I had spent an entire year trying to comprehend. Since starting my Ph.D. at the University of Arkansas, I really feel like the students, faculty, and staff in the African and African American Studies Program have become my family. I have learned so much from being surrounded by people with similar research interests as my own in a supporting, encouraging community.”

## WHITNEY MARTIN

Whitney Martin earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in journalism at Temple University in 2004. She finished her Master of Arts at Rosemont College in 2009. At Rosemont, she focused on African retentions in the African American Church in literature. She is in her third year of the English literature Ph.D. program at the University of Arkansas. She is focusing on “passing” (when light-toned African Americans could be mistakenly accepted as white) in late twentieth-century African American popular literature under the direction of Drs. Fagan, White, and Marren.

“My interest in African American studies began when I took the course, Psychology of the Black Experience, in undergrad and continued through my graduate study. Now, I am interested in signifying traditions and racial progress narratives in literature outside the canon. I want to consider how these authors position black identity in a (post)racial society. I am grateful to be included in the African and African American Studies Program and look forward to exciting intellectual exchanges.”





## MISTI NICOLE HARPER

Misti Nicole Harper completed her comprehensive exams and earned her Ph.D. candidacy in history in July 2014. She focuses her work on the American South, and emphasizes African American studies and civil rights. She will present her research paper entitled “To Deny Black Womanhood: The Mothers’ League of Central High School” at the Association for the Study of African American Life and History Conference in Memphis, Tennessee. This paper will be a foundational chapter for her dissertation, tentatively titled *Radical Brassbounds: Conservative Women, Race, Class, and Political Identity in the American South*.

“I am a native Southerner, and there is nothing more Southern than to study and obsess about the South. African American history is Southern history, says Harper. “I feel uniquely privileged to be a part of the African and African American Studies Program. Not only do I benefit from the professional mentorship of professors such as Dr. White and Dr. Gigantino, but this association has granted me access to opportunities and a wealth of experiences that differ so greatly from my own. As a historian and as a student, there is nowhere I would rather be on this campus than with this program.”



## MARY MARGARET HUI

Mary Margaret Hui, senior graduate assistant for AAST, passed her candidacy exams in spring 2014 for the higher education administration doctoral program. Her research focuses on underrepresented students and faculty. She received her Master of Arts in 2011 in history from the University of Arkansas and graduated cum laude with a Bachelor of Arts in history and drama with a minor in African and African American studies. She is currently working on her dissertation under the direction of Dr. James Hammons, professor of higher education. She expects to complete her Ed.D. in May 2015.

Last year, Mary Margaret developed African and African American Studies’ first self-paced online correspondence course for the Global Campus, The African American Experience. “Creating this course was such a wonderful opportunity to not only develop an interdisciplinary survey, but to meet students where they are—in the digital world. We can now bring education to new areas and that’s exciting! It is also meaningful to me because the African and African American Studies Program made me who I am today. Without the rigorous, dynamic course material and faculty mentorship throughout my undergraduate career, I would never have found my true passion in life. AAST gave me a purpose, and I will forever be grateful for this program and its faculty!”





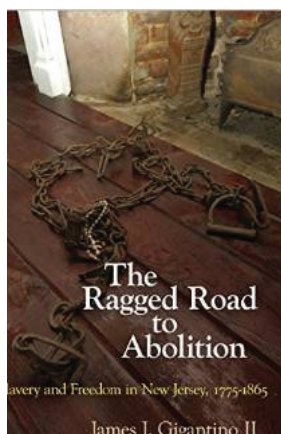
## KELLY TUCKER

Kelly Tucker started working with the African and African American Studies Program in October 2013, following seven years with the Fulbright Institute of International Relations. As the program assistant, Kelly has watched the office grow and change dramatically since we first moved into Memorial Hall. “We have a computer study area and a number of seating spaces for our students and faculty to study and get to know one another. The students, faculty and graduate students are very active and enthusiastic. I feel honored to work with such a great group of individuals.”

## FACULTY NEWS

### JAMES GIGANTINO II

Dr. James Gigantino II's *The Ragged Road to Abolition: Slavery and Freedom in New Jersey, 1775-1865*, published by the University of Pennsylvania Press, will be released this October. The book chronicles slavery and its gradual end in the Garden State. Gigantino shows how Northerners clung tightly to slavery, participated in the domestic slave trade, and twisted the state's abolition laws into helping them create new forms of bondage.



Dr. Gigantino is also in the process of editing two books. The first, *The American Revolution in New Jersey: Where the Battlefield Meets the Homefront* will be published by Rutgers University Press in 2015. This is a collection of nine essays that explore the everyday experiences and intersections between the home front and the front line of New Jerseyans during the American Revolution. *Slavery and Secession in Arkansas: A Documentary History* explores the role slavery played in the secession movement in Arkansas. This will be published by the University of Arkansas Press in late 2015.



James Gigantino II, Assistant Professor of History



## SABRINA BILLINGS

Dr. Sabrina Billings argues that Tanzanian beauty pageants differ significantly from those in western cultures because they are socially progressive events that, in many cases, provide contestants with an opportunity to access an education and social mobility that would otherwise be impossible. Her book, *Language, Globalization and the Making of a Tanzanian Beauty Queen* examines Tanzanian beauty pageants as a place where women use verbal and non-verbal communication to struggle for mobility, access to education and a place in the global world.

Billings' study of pageant participants' communication laid the foundation for a much larger study of gender, inequality, opportunity, and cosmopolitanism in Tanzania. "Swahili is the national language and the most common language spoken by contestants and other pageant participants. However, English is seen as the ticket, and in many cases it is the ticket," affirmed Billings. "English is a cornerstone of pageant success, yet what that English sounds like, and what speaking it means in these events, is informed by a complex of local ideologies, practices and institutions." At the heart of Billings' thesis is that the use of English is a way that participants present themselves within the pageant setting, by communicating their social and educational status in the hopes that this skill will prove their worth in a globalized world.

Billings found that though participants' use of hybridized or non-standard English may demonstrate a relatively elite social status within a specific, local setting, its value often plummets when it's relocated to a more national, global or institutionalized setting. Local and hybridized varieties of English, Billings said, "typically do not help speakers much in their quest to change the material reality of their lives, but instead afford their users rather slim opportunities for social or geographic mobility."

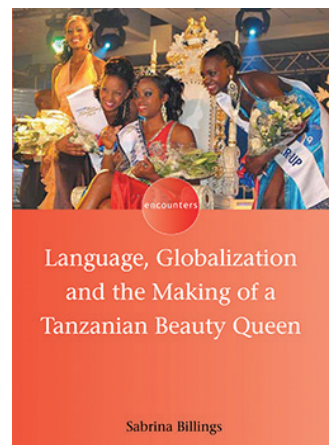
The adoption and display of western norms has not gone uncontested, though. Some citizens of Tanzania consider beauty pageants and independent women to be a threat to society by undermining masculine authority. Accordingly, beauty pageants are still largely monitored by the state and continue



Sabrina Billings, Associate Professor of Anthropology

to reflect official Tanzanian national culture. This manifests, most visibly, through the policing of language and the female body.

Billings is affiliated with the African and African American Studies Program, and serves as an associate professor of world languages, literatures, and cultures. She is the director of the Swahili Language Program for the J. William Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Arkansas. *Language, Globalization and the Making of a Tanzanian Beauty Queen* was published by Multilingual Matters.





## CHARLES F. ROBINSON II

Charles F. Robinson, Vice Chancellor for Diversity and Community at the University of Arkansas, received the NOARK Individual Diversity Champion Award from the Northwest Arkansas Human Resources Association. He was presented his award during the 2013 Managers Conference hosted by the NOARK in September. “It is a great honor to receive this award,” said Robinson. “I am especially honored to know that members of the Northwest Arkansas community recognize and support the work we are doing at the University and beyond to make this a more inclusive and welcoming place.”

During the presentation ceremony, Dr. Barbara Lofton, Director of Diversity Programs at the Sam M. Walton College of Business, stated that Robinson earned the award for his “work promoting and ensuring diversity and inclusion for all persons; for being a voice of those who cannot speak for themselves or others; for having the courage and confidence to speak up for what is right when things are going in the opposite direction; and for being a role model who demonstrates it is not enough to make a difference but is more important to be a ‘difference maker.’”

“Charles Robinson has been among the strongest voices promoting our diversity goals at the University of Arkansas since he arrived on campus in 1999,” said Chancellor G. David Gearhart. “He did so in the classroom, as a history professor and then as director of the university’s African and African American Studies Program. Since 2009 he has been in charge of all university-wide efforts to enhance diversity — first as Vice Provost for Diversity and since July as Vice Chancellor for Diversity and Community. He is doing an outstanding job, and I am very pleased that he has received this award, which he richly deserves.”

NOARK is the Northwest Arkansas chapter of the Society of Human Resources Management. Since Sept. 2, 1971, NOARK has been providing service to the Human Resources community of Northwest Arkansas as a not-for-profit organization with membership of more than 300 Human Resource professionals, with over 155 companies represented. The NOARK Diversity Champion award recognizes outstanding contributions from individuals,



Dr. Charles F. Robinson II, Vice Chancellor for Diversity and Community, Professor of History

businesses and organizations in the Northwest Arkansas region that exhibit leadership, innovation and tireless efforts to bring diversity and cultural awareness to our region.

Robinson promotes diversity through his extensive community service, as a University of Arkansas administrator and professor, as well as a scholar. He is the author of four books: *Dangerous Liaisons: Sex and Love in the Segregated South*; *Engaging Missouri: An Epic Drama of Love, Honor and Redemption across the Color Line*; *Forsaking All Others: A True Story of Interracial Sex and Revenge in the 1880s South*; and *Remembrances in Black: Personal Perspectives of the African American Experience at the University of Arkansas, 1940s-2000*; in addition to numerous articles, book chapters and reviews.



## PEARL DOWE

Dr. Pearl K. Dowe, associate professor of political science and affiliated member of African and African American studies at the University of Arkansas, addressed African American public opinion in the latest analysis of results from the Blair Center-Clinton School Poll. The full report was released Wednesday, June 12, 2013. According to poll results, African Americans have a greater sense of political commonality with Latinos than with whites when it comes to issues like political power and representation. African Americans also report a greater sense of overall competition with whites than with Latinos. “Although African Americans were a significant voting block in 2012, their marginalized existence weakens their political strength thus increasing the need for political coalitions,” said Dowe. “How African Americans view Latinos and whites will be critical to their ability to advance their economic and political agenda.”

To gauge the American political landscape in the aftermath of the 2012 presidential election, the Diane D. Blair Center of Southern Politics and Society in the J. William Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Arkansas and the University of Arkansas Clinton School of Public Service, conducted a comprehensive national poll of political preferences and behaviors among 3,600 respondents. The 2012 Blair Center-Clinton School Poll, with an oversample of African Americans, addresses the serious dearth of data available to politicians and researchers striving to understand this dynamic segment of the American populace.

When asked about political power and representation, 36 percent of African Americans reported having something in common with whites while 48 percent stated the same in reference to Latinos. Similarly, 44 percent of African American respondents reported little to nothing in common with whites while only 29 percent stating they had little to nothing in common with Latinos. In responding to questions about a sense of competition with other groups, 71 percent of African Americans reported having some to a lot of competition with whites and 64 percent reported the same sense with Latinos. “African Americans have consistently increased their level of political engagement at the national level when mobilized to do so,” said Dowe. “If the model of mobilization that occurred in 2008 and 2012 continues and expands to local, state and midterm elections there could possibly be a shift



*Dr. Pearl K. Dowe, Associate Professor of Political Science*

in political power within the South and in other areas where there are large concentrations of African Americans.”

In addition to the information on political commonality and competition, the full report contains comparisons among the three groups on quality of life questions such as health care, home ownership, educational attainment, income and unemployment. The report also addresses political attitudes toward abortion, discrimination, immigration and gay marriage. “This group is still addressing disparities in income, education and health,” said Dowe. “It will be critical for African Americans to utilize their increasing political leverage to develop coalition partners and seek new forms of activism to alleviate the existing problems throughout African-American communities.”

The United States is projected to become a majority-minority nation for the first time in 2043, a pattern already evident in communities throughout the nation. Whites are expected to remain the largest single group; however, no group will comprise a majority. This demographic shift will have significant impact on electoral outcomes, according to results from a nationwide academic poll.



# LISA CORRIGAN

Dr. Lisa M. Corrigan, associate professor of communication, and an affiliated faculty member in the African and African American Studies Program and the Latin American and Latino Studies Program, has been named Director of the Gender Studies Program at the University of Arkansas. Corrigan assumed the directorship during the summer of 2013 after years of active involvement in the program.

As director, Corrigan's duties will include coordinating the program's monthly colloquium featuring subjects as diverse as gender and the culture of smoking in Russia, images of the female body in contemporary culture, gender and suicide in nineteenth-century Mexico City, masculinity and sexuality in ancient Rome, and gender and South African activism. She will also organize sessions with roots in civic activism, such as "More Than A Statistic: A Night for Reproductive Justice and Gender Equity," a recent University of Arkansas Students for Gender Equity event. Corrigan is also charged with refining and expanding the curriculum for the gender studies minor, advising students and promoting the interdisciplinary study of gender both on-campus and off. The program promotes undergraduate research in the field of gender studies and encourages the university's very best students to publish or exhibit their work.

"I am thrilled to be the new Director of Gender Studies," said Corrigan. "The program encourages and sustains cutting-edge interdisciplinary work and does so through dedicated faculty mentoring across campus. It serves a diverse population of students and its expansion will help to serve the needs of a wide variety of communities at the university."

Corrigan's research focuses on the relationship between the Black Power movement in the United States and the Cuban Revolution and does so through the prison writings of movement activists. Her writings have appeared in *Advances in the History of Rhetoric*, *Women and Language*, *Communication Quarterly* and *The National Journal of Urban Education* and



Dr. Lisa Corrigan, Associate Professor of Communication and Director of the Gender Studies Program

*Practice.* Forthcoming publications will include articles in *The Journal of Post-Colonial Writing* and *Intertexts*. Her book, *Prison Power: How Prison Politics Influenced the Movement for Black Liberation*, will appear in the University of Alabama Press series, "Rhetoric, Culture and Social Critique." Her second book project centers on black journalist Louis Lomax's contributions to the radicalization of the civil rights movement.

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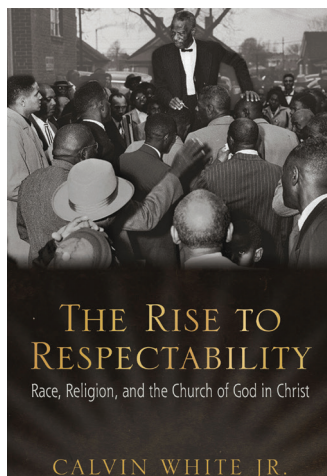
## CALVIN WHITE, JR.

Calvin White Jr., associate professor of history and director of the African and American Studies Program is currently working on his next research project about Oscar Stanton Depriest, an African American Congressman from Illinois. White will focus on Depriest's life as a political pioneer in the Republican Party at a time when African Americans began voting for Democrats during the New Deal era.

White has been named to the Board of Directors of the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation. "I welcomed the opportunity to serve Arkansas in the capacity of a board member," White said. "Governor Rockefeller's love for the state led him to not only give of his time, but he also assured that substantive change continued after his death. The foundation is working hard to change Arkansas and I simply could not turn down the opportunity to be a part of something special."

The Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation has helped to build and sustain the organizations that serve and strengthen Arkansas for nearly 40 years. Through grant making and strategic partnerships, they are working hard to help close the economic and educational gaps that leave too many Arkansas families in persistent poverty.

White was also honored as a finalist for the Dr. John and Mrs. Lois Imhoff Award for Outstanding Teaching and Student Mentorship on December 9, 2013. Ed Clausen, holder of the Ray C. Adam Endowed Chair in Chemical Engineering, was the 2013 winner. White is one of the most decorated faculty members in the J. William Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences, having won nearly all available awards since his arrival on campus in fall 2007.



Calvin White, Jr., Director of the African and African American Studies Program and Associate Professor of History

White's research focuses on the extent to which class, respectability and the efforts of racial uplift intersected in the development of African Americans' religious traditions and racial identity after emancipation in the Arkansas and Mississippi Delta. He published *The Rise to Respectability: Race Religion and the Church of God in Christ* in 2012, which documents the history of the Church of God in Christ and examines its cultural and religious impact on African Americans and on the history of the South.

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*I welcomed the opportunity to serve Arkansas in the capacity of a board member.*

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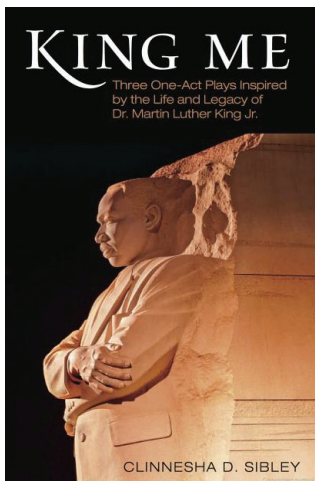


## CLINNESHA SIBLEY

Clinnesha D. Sibley, playwright, director and educator, brought a different kind of keynote address to the 18th annual Recommitment Banquet, hosted by the Northwest Arkansas Martin Luther King Jr. Council on January 20, 2014. Sibley directed her original one-act play, *Bound by Blood*, featuring University of Arkansas student actors Britney Walker-Meritte and Brandyn Smith.

The play is part of Sibley's trilogy *King Me: Three One Act Plays Inspired by the Life and Legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*, which was published by the University of Arkansas Press in 2013. The play is set in the South, with characters and themes that dramatize one of King's best-known quotes.

Sibley is assistant professor of theatre, head of playwriting and affiliated member of the African and African American Studies Program.



## BENJAMIN FAGAN

Dr. Benjamin Fagan, assistant professor of African and African American studies and English, has won a National Endowment for the Humanities Post-Doctoral Fellowship at the Library Company of Philadelphia. The prestigious program awards up to four fellowships a year, and winners are chosen from a national pool of candidates. Fagan will step out of the classroom from January until May 2015 for this residential fellowship that he will use to work on his book, *The Black Newspaper and the Chosen Nation*, which examines how the institutional and material forms of black newspapers helped shape ideas of black "chosenness" in the decades before the Civil War.

"Upon his arrival, Dr. Fagan made an immediate impact. He helped to expand our course offerings and his classes have become extremely popular," said Dr. Calvin White Jr., director of the African and African American Studies Program and associate professor of history. "His interaction with students is simply amazing, and we congratulate him





on this high honor. Dr. Fagan's research is indicative of the interdisciplinary work going on in Fulbright."

"Dr. Fagan has a way of putting his honors to use not only in his own research but also in the service of others," affirmed Dr. Dorothy Stephens, chair of the Department of English. "His students understand their own lives better when they delve into the history of African American print culture."

Fagan was the first joint appointed faculty member in the African and African American Studies Program. He has won fellowships from the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the Carter G. Woodson Institute for African American and African Studies, and the American Antiquarian Society. His work has appeared in journals such as *Comparative American Studies* and *American Periodicals*, and in 2012 he was awarded the Best Article Prize by the Research Society for American Periodicals.

As an awardee, Fagan will conduct his research at the Library Company, America's oldest cultural institution and that served as the Library of Congress from the Revolutionary War until 1800. Founded by Benjamin Franklin in 1731, it functioned as the nation's largest public library until the Civil War. Holdings include the country's second largest collection of pre-1801 American imprints and one of the largest collections of 18th-century British books in America. Further, the Library Company houses more than half a million rare books and graphics that are capable of supporting research in a variety of fields and disciplines relating to the history of America and the Atlantic world in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries.



## CAREE BANTON

Caree Banton, assistant professor of African and African American studies and history was awarded one of five faculty research grants through the Arts and Humanities Seed Funding Program from the office of the vice provost for research and economic development at the University of Arkansas this past spring.

The grants, totaling \$20,000, are intended to enrich the research and professional growth of the faculty member and the university and result in new opportunities for research or other creative endeavors. The money will be used on items that will further a project such as materials, supplies and travel.

"The proposals reflected a healthy diversity of interests in the arts and humanities on campus," said Cynthia Sagers, associate vice provost for research and economic development. "This is the third year of the program, and all evidence suggests that this investment has the potential to stimulate further creative endeavors and extramural support."

Banton will use her grant to conduct research and make revisions to her book, "More Auspicious Shores: Post-Emancipation Barbadian Emigrants in Pursuit of Freedom, Citizenship, and Nationhood in Liberia, 1834-1912." The book uses a narrative of a group of 50 Barbadian families and their efforts to emigrate to Liberia and to build a black nation that would be the envy of the world to explore meanings and experiences of freedom, citizenship and nationhood from a transatlantic perspective.

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## BRANDON JACKSON

Brandon Jackson, assistant professor of African and African American studies and sociology, has settled in to his first year at the University of Arkansas. Not only has he served on a number of master's theses committees, Dr. Jackson has also served on a number of university panels and served as the advisor for the University of Arkansas chapter of the National Association of Black Men United, a non-profit organization to help graduation rates of African American men. Dr. Jackson also served as a reviewer for the *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, an international and interdisciplinary journal. Dr. Jackson has published two peer-reviewed articles relating to his research and is currently in the process of writing another article with senior graduate assistant, Mary Margaret Hui, based on their mutual research interests.

*We are proud to call Drs Fagan, Banton, Jackson and Valandra members of our faculty and look forward to their successes in the upcoming year!*



## DR. VALANDRA

Dr. Valandra, assistant professor for African and African American studies and the School of Social Work has had a busy first year here at the University of Arkansas. Not only has Dr. Valandra presented at numerous national and international conferences, she has also co-authored and published an article on diversity in grandparenting and its social construction by adult children, grandchildren, and society in *Encyclopedia of Social Work*. She was also invited by the editors of *Mothers, Mothering, and Sex Work* to submit an article for their upcoming collection on the intergenerational mothering strategies of African American mothers used in domestic sex trafficking. Dr. Valandra served as a reviewer for the following peer-reviewed journals: *Affilia: Journal of Women and Social Work*; *Gender, Work, and Organization*; and *Radical Pedagogy*, three well-respected interdisciplinary journals. Additionally, she currently serves as a reviewer for the juried journals *Qualitative Social Work* and *Journal of Family Issues*. Dr. Valandra received a \$10,000 grant as the recipient of the 2014 Community Research Award, sponsored by the interdisciplinary Bernice Jones Endowed Chair in the Community. For her research project, Dr. Valandra is using community-based participatory action research methods to collaborate with community stakeholders to assess and address the needs of African American families regarding domestic violence services in Northwest Arkansas. Dr. Valandra was selected to receive the Robert C. and Sandra Connor Endowed Faculty Fellowship provided to support the career advancement of faculty who provide the highest quality teaching, research, and service to the college.



# CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS



This past academic year has seen numerous African and African American faculty present their research and national and international conferences. Below is a list of just some of our faculty presentations.

Dr. Valandra in January presented her work “The Experiences of African American Women Survivors of Sexual Violence with the Men in Their Lives,” at the 18th Annual Society for Social Work and Research Conference in San Antonio, Texas.

Drs. Valandra, Calvin White, Jr., and Yvette Murphy-Erby, with our senior graduate assistant Mary Margaret Hui, presented “Setting the Stage for Junior Faculty and Programmatic Success,” at the American Association for Blacks in Higher Education in Atlanta, Georgia in March 2014.

Dr. Sabrina Billings presented, “Google Translate, Linguistic Peripheralism, and the Economics of Language Empowerment in East Africa” at the Sociolinguists Symposium 20 in Jyväskylä, Finland on in June 2014.

Dr. Benjamin Fagan was busy presenting “The *North Star* and the Black Atlantic 1848” at the Society of 19th-Century Americanists Biennial Conference at Chapel Hill, North Carolina and “Rogue Reading” at the Modern Language Association Annual Conference in Chicago, Illinois, both in 2014.

Dr. James Gigantino II has been even busier with three conference presentations in 2014 so far! In January, he presented “Freedom of the Womb: Realities of Women and Gradual Abolition in New Jersey, 1804-1860” at the American Historical Association Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C. In February, he delivered “The Failure of the Revolutionary Era: New Jersey and Gradual Abolition” at the Consortium on the Revolutionary Era, 1750-1850 Annual Meeting at the University of Mississippi, Oxford, Mississippi. In May, Gigantino presented, “Slavery and Abolition in Revolutionary New Jersey,” at the Museum of Early Trades & Crafts Speaker Series in Madison, New Jersey.





From left to right: Dr. Brandon Jackson, Dr. Caree Banton, Dr. Valandra, Dr. Sabrina Billings, Dr. Benjamin Fagan and Dr. Calvin White

## BROWN BAG SERIES: 2013-2014

The African and African American Studies Program continued its Brown Bag Lecture Series this year. In the fall and spring, professors and students were invited to present their research to the University academic community for critique and assessment. Dr. Brandon Jackson, assistant professor of African and African American studies and sociology and criminal justice, presented the first lecture of 2013 on October 2<sup>nd</sup>. His work, “Constructing Brotherhood: Racial and Gendered Emotion Culture as a Strategy to Navigate Predominantly White Settings,” is part of an on-going research project that explores the processes associated with social mobility among young black students. Further, Jackson questions how gender, race, and class shape these processes.

On November 6<sup>th</sup>, Dr. Caree Banton presented her study, “Shifting Frontiers of Freedom, Citizenship and Nationhood in Caribbean Post-Emancipation and the African Diaspora.” Banton, assistant professor of African and African American studies and history, examines race, slavery and abolition in the Caribbean. Her research explores the ways by which Afro-Caribbean people navigate evolving national identities in the wake of colonialism and the legacy of slavery.

The final Brown Bag lecture of fall 2013 concluded on December 4<sup>th</sup>. Dr. Valandra, assistant professor of African and African American studies and social work, offered her research, “The Experiences of African American Women Survivors of Sexual Violence with the Men in Their Lives.” Valandra’s scholarship examines how traumatic experiences related to gender-based violence intersect with systems of privilege, oppression and poverty.

The African and African American Studies Program hosted Dr. Sabrina Billings as the first lecturer of 2014. On February 5<sup>th</sup>, Billings presented “Which Is Your Favorite Color?: Race, Ethnicity, and Linguistic Expertise in Tanzanian Beauty Pageants.” Billings is assistant professor of world languages, literatures, and cultures and director of the Swahili language program. Her presentation represents the thesis of her 2013 book, *Language, Globalization, and the Making of a Tanzanian Beauty Queen*.

On March 5<sup>th</sup>, Dr. Benjamin Fagan presented “The Black Newspaper and the Chosen Nation,” which is the heart of his forthcoming manuscript that examines how the institutional and material forms of black newspapers helped shape ideas of black “chosenness” in the decades before the Civil War. Fagan is an assistant professor of African and African American studies and English.

Dr. Calvin White, Jr. ended the year’s Brown Bag Series on April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2014. He offered his examination of US Representative Oscar DePriest (R-IL) with “Oscar DePriest, One Among Many: A Black Congressman Amongst Segregationists.” This lecture is the foundational research for a broader project that examines the life of DePriest as a political pioneer. White, associate professor of history and director of African and African American studies, is a Southern historian who specializes in African American religious traditions and racial identity. Look out for news about our upcoming Brown Bag Series speakers!

Fagan also coordinated this year’s lectures and served as its Master of Ceremonies. In his second year at the University of Arkansas, Fagan recognizes the importance of this series to the larger academic community as a representation of the mission of the African and African American Studies Program. He affirms that, “the Brown Bag Lecture Series brings together faculty and graduate students from a variety of disciplines...these events help foster the interdisciplinary community that makes our program so special.”



# ADVISING INFO

If you have any questions regarding course offerings or your combined major/minor program of study, please ask an academic advisor. Visit their website at [fcac.uark.edu](http://fcac.uark.edu) to make an appointment or for more information.

## Fulbright College Advising Center



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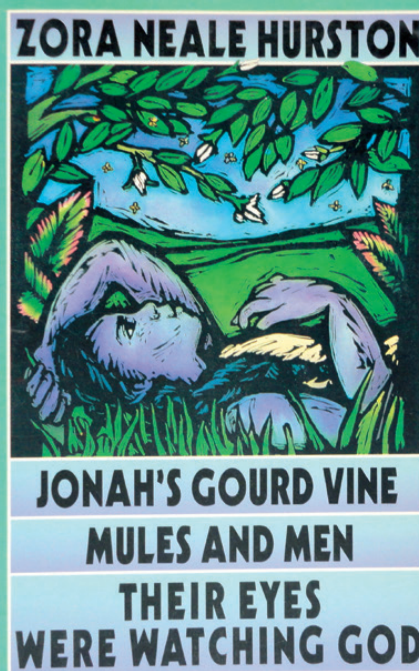
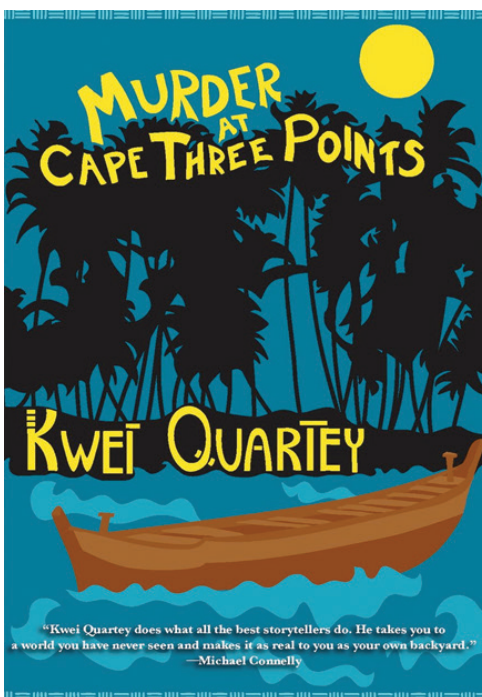


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## SUGGESTED SUMMER READING LIST

In May 2013, the African and African American Studies Program began encouraging students, faculty, and other interested members of community to read selections of African and African American fiction through our Facebook page. We believe that these readings are not only beneficial to AAST students and faculty, but may serve as springboard for inciting general interest in African and African American studies and our program. We invite you to join us in reading these acclaimed works!







## STUDY ABROAD GHANA

This summer marked the third run of our study abroad program in Ghana with the J. William Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences. Faculty leaders Dr. James Gigantino II and Dr. Calvin White, Jr. guided 14 students across Ghana. Our faculty and students, as well as senior graduate assistant Mary Margaret Hui, spent three weeks exploring Ghana. Before departure, the faculty and students spent two weeks in intensive classes preparing them for the trip. This not only provides a detailed orientation and education of Ghanaian culture and history, but also allows students and faculty to spend as much time as possible engaging with the culture while in country.

Our program is unique in that it is not based in one particular location; we travel the entire span of the country from the coast to the northern border of Burkina Faso. Highlights from the trip include Larabanga mosque, Pikworo Slave Camp, Elmina Slave Castle, Cape Coast Slave Castle, the Kumasi market, and the Parliament of Ghana. However, this program is more than a trip; it is an *experience*. Students earn 6 hours of university credit while engaging in a first-hand cultural immersion. We are also excited that our program can support our majors and minors with scholarship opportunities.

This program runs every other summer, so if you missed out this time, look forward to joining us again in summer 2016! **Learn more at [aast.uark.edu](http://aast.uark.edu).**



# COFFEE WITH THE PROFESSORS



For the second year running, the African and African American Studies Program hosted our highly popular Coffee with the Professors. This event brings students and professors together to connect and get to know each other in a casual atmosphere. Our first Coffee with the Professors was held on October 1, 2013 at Big Momma's Coffee House and Espresso Bar on Dickson Street, which was well attended with an array of students, faculty, and graduate assistants. Following our move into office space on campus, our second and third events were held in Memorial Hall 230 on December 3, 2013 and February 19, 2014. We were excited by the number of students and faculty who showed up to these events to discuss a whole range of topics, from the program, study abroad opportunities, extracurricular activities to research interests. We look forward to continue hosting Coffee with the Professors this year and see you all there!



## THANK YOU

The African and African American Studies Program would like to extend our thanks to the following people for their contributions to our program and their help in making the second issue of our magazine possible:

- Ali Williams, Director of Creative Services, J. William Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences
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- Steve Voorhies, Manage of News and Media Relations, University Relations
- Kelly Tucker, Program Assistant, African and African American Studies





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